CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1395
13 May 1996

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 13 MAY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION CONCERNING THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement made on 19 April 1996 by the Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation concerning the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Please take the appropriate steps to issue this document as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute it among delegations of all States members of the Conference and non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed): Grigori V. Berdennikov
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation
to the Conference on Disarmament

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

concerning the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty

The Russian Federation is a consistent advocate of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. In October of this year it will be five years since Russia introduced a moratorium on nuclear testing.

I am convinced that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT), the drafting of which is now entering a decisive phase, will be a powerful factor preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their qualitative improvement.

Guided by the desire to facilitate the prompt elaboration of the treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to declare that Russia supports the commitment to ban all nuclear-weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions in any environment.

Our approach is based on the fact that Russia, like the other nuclear Powers, bears particular responsibility for ensuring the safety of its nuclear arsenal pending the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains our ultimate goal.

In this connection, when the CTBT enters into force Russia will be obliged to conduct nuclear stockpile stewardship activities which do not run counter to the ban to be imposed by the future treaty. To this end, the following measures will be implemented:

1. Adoption and implementation of a federal programme of activities to ensure the safety and reliability of the Russian nuclear arsenal without conducting nuclear explosions.

2. Support for existing Russian nuclear centres and implementation of programmes in the field of theoretical and investigatory nuclear technology projects, which will ensure maintenance of the scientific and technological potential and the high level of skills of scientists, designers and employees in these nuclear centres.

3. Maintenance of the basic capability for the possible renewal of nuclear testing activities in the event that the situation develops in such a way that the Russian Federation ceases to be bound by the restrictions contained in the treaty.

4. Continuation of activities aimed at improving our capabilities for monitoring the ban on nuclear testing.

5. Further improvement of information-gathering and analytical resources, including intelligence resources, to ensure the collection of reliable and timely information on nuclear arsenals, possible covert nuclear armament projects or other activities conducted by other countries that are of significance for nuclear weapons purposes.

At the same time I wish to declare that Russia, if its supreme interests are threatened, will make use of its right to withdraw from the treaty in order to conduct all necessary tests which may be called for if there is no other possible means of confirming a high level of confidence in the safety or reliability of any of the key types of Russian nuclear weapons.

While expressing our support for the decision on this matter taken by the 1995 Conference on the Review and Extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we call on all participants in the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty to do their utmost to complete the negotiations no later than in September 1996.